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News Release ~ Communiqué

Government upholds licensing of television specialty services

OTTAWA, September 1, 1994 The Federal Government has upheld the licensing of two new specialty television services. Canadian Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy said today that the French-language service Arts et Divertissements (A&D) and the English-language service Bravo! will now be able to proceed without further delay.

These services were among 10 Canadian specialty services that were licensed by the CRTC last June and are expected to be available to cable television subscribers beginning in January 1995. The government received various petitions regarding these services, seeking to have the CRTC reconsider its decision to license them and hold new hearings or to have the government set aside the CRTC decisions.

Following a thorough review of the petitions, the government has decided to uphold the original licensing decisions to ensure that the new Canadian services can proceed without delay.

Mr. Dupuy said that, by supporting the licensing of A&D and Bravo!, the government is demonstrating the importance it places on the development of Canadian content, and is ensuring that Canadian programming, for both English and French markets, will be offered in areas now served only by U.S. signals. The addition of the services is expected to stimulate production activity resulting in more jobs for Canadian artists and creators.

The government does not see these as replacements for alternative television programming as set out in the Broadcasting Act and hopes that other applicants will come forward with programming alternatives. According to the Act, alternative programming services should "cater to tastes and interests not adequately provided for by the programming provided for mass audiences, and include programming devoted to culture and the arts."

For this reason, Mr. Dupuy, on behalf of the Government, will continue his efforts with public broadcasters, the cultural community and other interested parties to facilitate the development of alternative programming services. This would position the performing arts sector to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Information Highway.

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